Picnic '78: a real crowd-pleaser

"Rain, rain, go away. Come again another day. . . ." The rain started early on Friday night and fell steadily until Saturday morning. But the early morning mist didn't dampen the spirits of the 24,000 attendees at the 37th Annual Grumman Aerospace Family Picnic on July 15.

Before a decision could be made on whether to go ahead or postpone the festivities, thousands of Grummanites decided for themselves. By 8:30 a.m., 10,000 people had streamed through the Calverton gates.

It's official

Grumman Aerospace Chairman and President George Skurla made it formally official when he raised the flag at 10 o'clock. Joining him at the picnic site was Grumman Corporation Chairman Jack Bierwirth. In his welcoming remarks, Skurla broadcasted the good news: "Sunshine is on it's way." And he was right. By early afternoon, sunshine flooded the 12-acre picnic grounds at Calverton.

Good times was the order of the day, and everybody did just that. Expecially the kids!

Hundreds of energetic picnickers entered the sporting events. After the five to 14-year-olds finished racing, the really serious competition began. . .such as the potato sack, three-legged and wheelbarrow races; the over-40 fat man race; and the crowd's favorite -- the egg-throwing contest.

While the kids were off gallivanting, parents took a snooze under the pines and oaks, chatted with co-workers, or cooked up a barbeque feast on their hibachis.

Throughout the day, the Grumman Employees' Band and the Rock Band played music ranging from old time favorites to the latest disco tunes.

And appetites were hearty. By 5 o'clock all the hot dogs, ice cream, milk and soda, and most of the beer had been consumed.

Kicking off the traditional hour-long entertainment were three "volunteers," two youngsters and George Skurla. They assisted Grumman's own three clowns, Bob, Jim and Jumbo in a magic act. Juggling, balancing and magic acts followed. Easily the hit of the show was Mr. Jiggs, a huge chimp who roller skated, rode a mini-bike and performed various other tricks for the crowd.

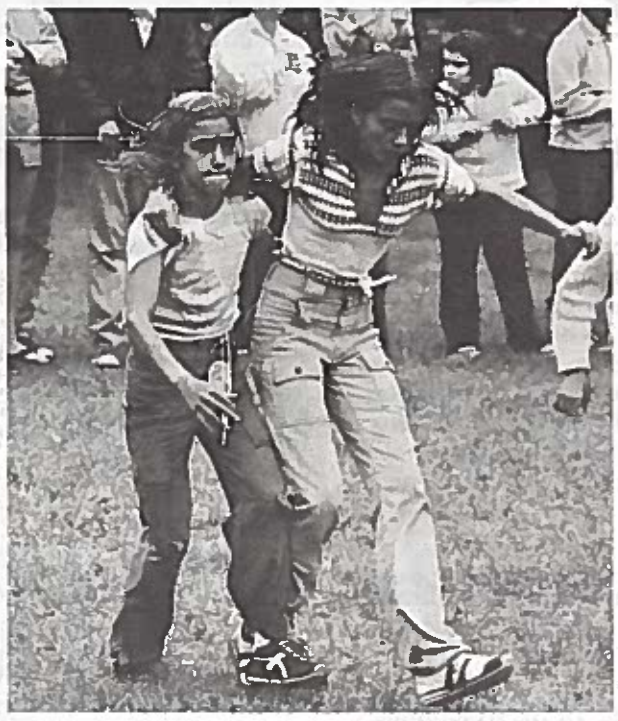
Immediately following the show, some of the picnickers moved over to the Junior Gloves boxing ring to see the small-fry bouts, while others headed back to the rides. The Caterpillar ride with its canvas cover was the early favorite, but all of the rides vied for top honors as the sun began to peep through the clouds.

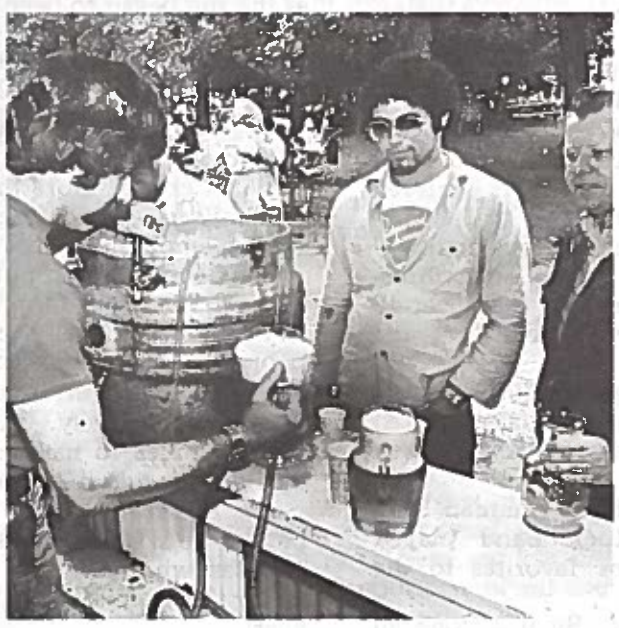
At 3 o'clock, Vice President Tom Rozzi began pulling tickets for the traditional door prixe drawing. Grand prize winner was Bruce Yberg of Proposal Operations, Plant 5.

Though it wasn't the Guiness Book of World Records crowd, more than 24,000 men, women and children joined forces to make it one of the most memorable picnics in recent years.

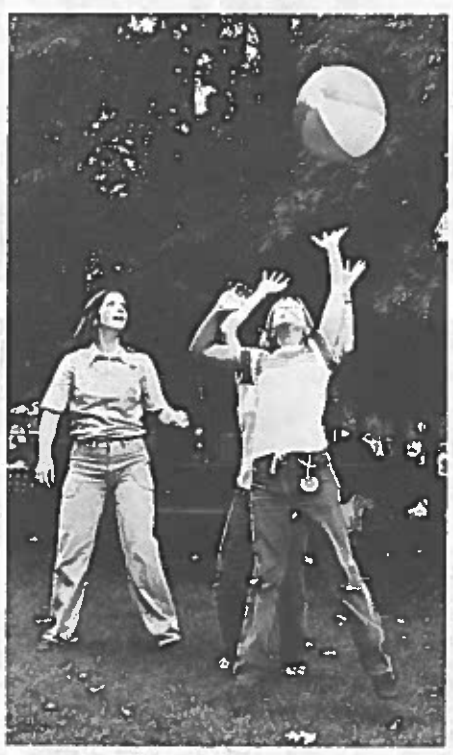
As George Skurla put it, "the record doesn't matter. We really have held that for some time anyway. What really counts is that so many people were bound and determined to have this picnic. In spite of the early morning mist, they came anyway. They came out here with their families to have a great time -- and they did. That's what really counts.

On behalf of all the hearty party-ers at the picnic, we wish to thank all those fellow Grummanites who gave up their Saturday to help make this picnic a great success. See you next year!





ANYTIME, BABY...!



Photos by Rich Breunig and Ken Johnson

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